
How Henry James Revised Roderick Hudson: A Study in Style

Author(s): Hélène Harvitt

Source: *PMLA*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Mar., 1924), pp. 203-227

Published by: [Modern Language Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/457289>

Accessed: 15-02-2016 11:40 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Modern Language Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *PMLA*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

X. HOW HENRY JAMES REVISED *RODERICK HUDSON*: A STUDY IN STYLE

Henry James tells us in his preface to the revised edition of his novels, with what interest and emotion he renewed acquaintance with his book, *Roderick Hudson*, after a quarter of a century had elapsed since its first appearance, in 1875. He takes up its failings and its defects, of which he is fully conscious and which he sees with very keen perspicacity. He writes:

I have felt myself then, on looking over past productions, the painter making use again and again of the tentative wet sponge. The sunk surface has here and there, beyond doubt, refused to respond: the buried secrets, the intentions, are buried too deep to rise again, and were indeed, it would appear, not much worth the burying. Not so, however, when the moistened canvas does obscurely flush and when resort to the varnish-bottle is thereby immediately indicated. The simplest figure for my revision of this present array of earlier, later, larger, smaller, canvases, is to say that I have achieved it by the very aid of the varnish-bottle. It is true of them throughout that, in words I have had occasion to use in another connexion (where too I had revised with a view to "possible amendment of form and enhancement of meaning") I have nowhere scrupled to re-write a sentence or a passage on judging it susceptible of a better turn.

The purpose of this article is to study in some detail the nature of the revisions James made, to classify them as much as possible, with the idea of throwing more light on Jamesean style.¹

It may be stated at the outset that James revised most thoroughly. There is barely a sentence in *Roderick Hudson* which has remained unchanged. Very often the revision is trifling, of practically no importance, but it is there, witness to the fact that its author read, reread, weighed and corrected. However, he never altered the order of a paragraph.

Henry James realized that "the center of interest through-

¹ This study is the result of investigations in connection with a course given by the author as "Lectrice" at the Sorbonne (1920-21). All quotations from the revised version of *Roderick Hudson* refer to the Macmillan edition of 1921, those from the first edition, to that of 1883 (2 vols).

out *Roderick* is in Rowland Mallet's consciousness, and the drama is the very drama of that consciousness . . . " He adds: "but as what happened to him was above all to feel certain things happening to others, to Roderick, to Christina, to Mary Garland, to Mrs. Hudson, to the Cavalieri, to the Prince, so the beauty of the constructional game was to preserve in everything its special value for *him*." James felt very keenly that his treatment of Mary Garland was insufficient to justify Roderick's having pledged his faith to her and Rowland's being in love with her from the start; he was aware of the fact that Mary was unconvincing, "in spite of the later patching-up of the girl's figure." As Mary plays such an important rôle in the novel we shall first study how James set about to patch her up, to prove or rather try to prove that she was "irresistible."

There is very little change from the original description of Mary. From calling her "slender" to saying that she was "straight" no progress is made, nor does James add much to our idea of the girl when he says instead of: "her *gray* eye was clear but not brilliant, and her features were bravely irregular" (p. 41), — "her *dark pupils* a trifle heavy, *failed*, as might be said, *of publicity of expression*. Her features were bravely irregular . . . " (p. 47). But the author has inserted a phrase, the type of phrase we shall find again and again and to which we shall refer later. A little further he again goes back to Mary and here the revision is more radical:

p. 58 *First edition*

The girl beside him pleased him immensely, and suspecting that her charm was essentially her own and not reflected from social circumstance, he wished to give himself the satisfaction of contrasting her with the meager influences of her education.

Revised edition p. 66.

The girl beside him appealed, strangely, to his sense of character, and even, in her way, to his sense of beauty, and, satisfied that her quality would be very much her own, and neither borrowed nor reflected nor imposed, he wished, positively as a help for liking her better, to make her show him how little her situation had had to give her.

We see from the above passage that James is preoccupied with the realization that Mary is not sufficiently convincing. And when Rowland tells her that he shall often wonder about her, her reaction to his remark is handled as follows:

p. 61 *First edition*

She received it not only, as Rowland foresaw, without a shadow of coquetry, of any apparent thought of listening to it gracefully, . . .

Revised edition p. 69

She received it only, as he had foreseen, without the sign of a flutter or a thought of conscious grace.

However, it is later in the book, when Mary has to contend with disappointment, with disillusionment and with humiliation, that James makes the greatest changes, changes in style, in his treatment of her:

V. II, p. 52.

She always had a smile, she was always eager, alert, responsive. She might be

p. 300

She was always eager, alert, responsive; she had always her large settled smile, which reminded him of some clear ample "spare-room," some expectant guest-chamber, as they said in New England, with its windows up for ventilation. She might be

Here James expands on the quality of Mary's smile (by using a metaphor), a feature which predominates throughout the novel. And in the same paragraph he continues:

This point he usually tried to ascertain; but he was obliged to proceed cautiously, for in her mistrustful shyness it seemed to her that cross-examination must necessarily be ironical.

This point he usually tried to ascertain, for the effect of her so suddenly-quickenened vision of a more mixed order than she ever dreamt of was to make her see everything as mixed, and cross-examination by that law, as necessarily ironic.

The last passage cited adds nothing to our conception of Mary but is an illustration of the later James style. The pages with which we are here concerned are a fine network of revisions, but lack of space permits of none but the most

characteristic changes. A few more examples, however, are necessary:

First edition

This was partly on account of the purity and rigidity of a mind that had not lived with its door ajar upon the high-road of thought, for passing ideas to drop in and out at their pleasure, but had made much of a few long visits from guests cherished and honoured—guests whose presence was a solemnity.

Revised edition

This was partly on account of the purity and rigidity of a mind that had not lived with its door ajar upon the high-road of cosmopolite chatter, for passing ideas to drop in and out at their pleasure, but that had none the less looked out, ever, from the threshold, for any straggler on the "march of ideas," any limping rumour or broken-winged echo of life, that would stop and be cherished as a guest.

There was something exquisite in her pious desire to improve herself, and Rowland encouraged it none the less that its fruits were not for him. In spite of her lurking rigidity and angularity it was very evident that she had a native sense of beauty which only asked to become pliable, and in which already at moments she lost herself delightedly. For all that she was not demonstrative, that her manner was simple and her small-talk of no very ample flow; for all that, as she has said, she was a young woman from the country, and the country was West Nazareth, and West Nazareth was, in its way, a stubborn little fact, she was feeling the direct influence of the great amenities of the world, and they were shaping her with a divinely intelligent touch. "Oh, exquisite

.....

Her desire to improve herself struck him at moments as almost grim, and not the less so that the fruits of the process for which his aid was indispensable were so little to be served at any table of his. She might have been originally as angular as he had, on the other scene, positively liked her for being; but who was to say now what mightn't result for her from the cultivation of a motive for curves? "Oh, exquisite

We have here a decided condensation of the first version, and we must admit that the passage about West Nazareth was somewhat diffuse. However, do we not have evidence again of the peculiar turn of James' later style rather than a bring-

ing into higher relief of Mary's character? And is it not also true of the following lines which he adds to the above revised version and which we do not find in the first edition?

First edition

When he said to Mary Garland that he wished he might see her ten years hence, he was paying mentally an equal compliment to circumstance and to the girl herself. Capacity was there, it could be freely trusted; observation would have but to sow its generous seed. "A superior woman"—the idea had harsh associations, but he watched it imaging itself in the vagueness of the future with a kind of hopeless confidence.

Revised edition

She would develop, evidently, right and left, and to the top of her capacity; and he would have been at the bottom of it all. But that was where he would remain, essentially and obscurely; all taken for granted, as a good cellar, with its dusky supporting vaults, is taken for granted in a sound house.

If the passage does anything but make the conception obscure, it is rather to emphasize the part played by Rowland, to stress his reactions. And again, showing the effect of Mary upon Rowland:

p. 147

At that season the wild flowers had mostly departed, but a few of them lingered, and Mary never failed to espy them in their outlying corners. They interested her greatly; she was charmed when they were old friends, and charmed even more when they were new. She displayed a very light foot in going in quest of them, and had soon covered the front seat of the carriage Rowland, of course, was alert in her service, and he gathered for her several botanical specimens, she called to him eagerly to stop; the thing was impossible! Poor Rowland, whose passion had been terribly underfed, enjoyed immensely the thought of having her care for three minutes what should become of him.

p. 411

At that season many of the wild flowers had gone, but others lingered and Mary never failed to "spot" them in their outlying corners. She gave herself up to them, interested when they were old friends, and charmed even more when they were new. Her foot was light in quest of them and she had soon covered the front seat of the carriage. Rowland had always supposed himself to dislike the race of weed-gathering, vase-dressing women, disposers, over the domestic scene, of bristling, tickling greenery; but he was none the less alert Poor Rowland, whose interest in her had so much more nourished itself on plain fare than snatched at any golden apple of reward, enjoyed immensely him.

Finally, to show what transformation had taken place in Mary's face during Roderick's absence, Henry James made the following revisions:

II, p. 39 *First edition*

She was older, easier, more free, she had more of the manner of society. She had more beauty as well, inasmuch as her beauty before had been the quality of her expression, and the sources from which this beauty was fed had in these two years evidently not wasted themselves.

Rowland felt almost instantly . . .
[not in this version]

Revised edition p. 285

She was older, easier, lighter; she had, as would have been said in Rome, more form. She had thus, he made out, more expression, facial and other, and it was beautifully as if this expression had been accumulating all the while, lacking on the scene of her life any channel to waste itself. It was like something she had been working at in the long days of home, an exquisite embroidery or a careful compilation, and she now presented the whole wealth of it as a king of pious offering. Rowland felt almost instantly She might have been an exceptionally fine specimen-islander of an unclassed group, brought home by a great navigator and treatable as yet mainly by beads and comfits.

Cristina Light says of Mary's beauty:

II, p. 80.

If a woman is not to be a brilliant beauty in the regular way, she will choose, if she's wise, to look like that.

p. 332

If a woman is not to scream out from every pore that she has an appearance—which is a most awful fate—quite the best thing for her is to carry that sort of dark lantern. On occasion she can flash it as far as she likes.

In another passage, a few lines above the one just cited, James speaks of the "rare nature, the strange life and play," of her beauty, and he has Christina Light add in the second version: "She looks magnificent when she glares—like a Medusa crowned not with snakes but with a tremor of doves' wings." Whereas in the first edition, in the early part, we are made to feel that Mary was decidedly "plain,"

yet interesting looking, in his revised version James tries to efface as much as possible the impression of plainness, though he is conscious of the fact that he needed to conserve an antithesis to Christina: "One is ridden by the law that antitheses, to be efficient, shall be both direct and complete. Directness seemed to fail unless Mary should be, so to speak, "plain," Christina being essentially so "coloured"; and completeness seemed to fail unless she too should have her potency. She could moreover, by which I mean the antithetic young woman could, perfectly have had it; only success would have been then in the narrator's art to attest it." James enhanced Mary's beauty in the second version, in the passages referring to it after the two years of separation from Roderick. We shall now pass to other characters in the book before trying to make any classifications or general remarks.

Christina Light is one of the characters which underwent the least changes in the revised version. James felt, as he tells us in his Preface, that her "own presence and action are, on the other hand, . . . all firm ground . . ." And he adds: "I remember at all events feeling, toward the end of *Roderick*, that the Princess Casamassima had been launched, that wound-up with the right silver key, she would go on a certain time by the motion communicated; thanks to which I knew the pity, the real pang of losing sight of her." He did, however, make one slight though important change. In the first edition Christina is a Protestant who turns Catholic in order to marry the Prince, while in the second James has the Cavaliere tell us: "and it's lucky for our friends that they too are children of the great Mother"—in the first edition he says: "though he does propose to marry a Protestant. He will handle that point after the marriage." And in another connection, where in the original version we read: "He was stupified at this indication that she had suddenly embraced the Catholic faith," in the later one we find: "He took account of this indication that she had suddenly begun again to *pratiquer* religiously"; and again: "Is it true that she has become a

Catholic? So she tells me. One day she got up in the depths of despair; at her wits' end, I suppose, in other words, for a new sensation. Suddenly it occurred to her that the Catholic Church might after all, hold the key—might give her what she wanted, so she sent for a priest.” Naturally this passage has no counterpart in the revision.

Henry James described the physical beauty of Christina with such vividness and skill that there was no occasion, when revising, to make any changes—a word is added or omitted here and there, but that is all.

When Rowland hears that Christina has broken off her engagement to the Prince, his reception of the news, in the revised version, only overloads the picture we have already made for ourselves of the young girl's character:

First edition

II. p. 86.

Rowland heard his news with a kind of fierce disgust; it seemed the sinister counterpart of Christina's preternatural mildness at Madame Grandoni's assembly. She had been too plausible to be honest. Without being able to trace the connection, he yet instinctively associated her present rebellion with her meeting with Mary Garland. If she had not seen Mary, she would have let things stand. It was monstrous to suppose that she could have sacrificed so brilliant a fortune to a mere movement of jealousy, to a refined impulse of feminine devilry, to a desire to frighten poor Mary from her security by again appearing in the field. Yet Rowland remembered his first impression of her; she was "dangerous," and she had measured in each direction the perturbing effect of her rupture. She was smiling her sweetest smile at it! For half an hour Rowland simply detested her—he longed to denounce

Revised edition

p. 340

Rowland greeted the news with a gasp, and there sounded in his ears the sinister click as of a fitting together of bad pieces. She had been too plausible to be honest. Without being able to trace the connection, he yet instinctively associated her present rebellion with her meeting with Mary. Sinister it thus suddenly showed, her exhibition of eager mildness at Madame Grandoni's, and all the uneasiness she had then stirred in him came back with a chill. Yes, it was clearer than it was obscure, and he recognised in the stroke now startling him the hand armed to deal some blow at Miss Garland's small remnant of security. So it hung before him, portentous and ugly. If she had not seen Mary she would have let things stand, but she had seen her and she acted. It was monstrous indeed to suppose that she could have sacrificed so brilliant a fortune to a mere movement of jealousy, to a calculation of

II. p. 86. *First edition*

her to her face. Of course, all he could say to Giacosa was that he was extremely sorry. "But I am not surprised," he added.

Revised edition p. 340

quite futile effects, to a desire to create for the poor girl some poisonous alarm. Yet he remembered his first impression of her; she was "dangerous," and she had measured in each quarter the penetration of her announced rupture. She hovered there for him as tasting *that* strength in it. If the question had been of her penetrating, *he*, verily, was penetrated, and it made him long, for a minute that was as sharp as a knife-edge, to denounce her to her face. But of course all he could say to his visitor was that he was extremely sorry, though indeed he was not surprised.

The above is a typical example of how James applied his varnishbrush. He took a straightforward, natural paragraph and introduced into it his characteristic psychological analysis, rendering it extremely obscure. The result, as the reader can see for himself, is that all life and spontaneity vanished.

Has Henry James altered or improved the character of Roderick as depicted in the original version? He says himself: "Roderick's disintegration, a gradual process, and of which the exhibitional interest is exactly that it *is* gradual and occasional, and thereby traceable and watchable, swallows two years in a mouthful, proceeds quite *not* by years, but by weeks and months, and thus renders the whole view the disservice of appearing to present him as a morbidly special case. . . . My mistake on Roderick's behalf—and not in the least of conception, but of composition and expression—is that, at the rate at which he falls to pieces, he seems to place himself beyond our understanding and our sympathy." James felt that he should have given many more "adventures and complications" but he understood that there is a law of time and that action needs "a certain factitious compactness." The following example will show

how he tried to accentuate the change which took place in Roderick's character:

p. 66 *First edition*

"That's not what she would call it; she would say I am corrupted."

. . .

"Stay a bit!" cried Roderick; you are a better Catholic than the Pope. I shall be content if she judges fairly of me—of my merits, that is. The rest she must not judge at all. She's a grimly devoted little creature; may she always remain so! Changed as I am, I adore her none the less.

Revised edition p. 75

"That's not what she would call it; she would say I'm spoiled; I'm not sure she wouldn't say that I'm already hideously corrupted." . . .

"Right about everything!" Roderick cried in derision; "what a horrible description of one's future bride! I don't ask you to be a better Catholic than the Pope. I shall be content if she's right about my interests—for 'everything,' sometimes, may happen to be hostile to *them*. But I agree with you about her grim devotion. It's exactly what I built on, and, changed as I am, I'm not changed about *her*."

There is a selfish note about the speech which is exaggerated in the second version. In one of the last chapters of the novel we again have a glimpse of Roderick through Rowland's eyes:

II, p. 150

Rowland sometimes walked with him; though Roderick never invited him he seemed properly grateful for his society. Rowland now made it a rule to treat him as a perfectly sane man, to assume that all things were well with him, and never to allude to the prosperity he had parted with or to the work he was not doing. He would have still said, had you questioned him, that Roderick's condition was only a lugubrious interlude. It might last yet for many a weary hour; but it was a long lane that had no turning.

p. 414

Rowland was sometimes the associate of these walks, for if his friend never directly proposed it he yet as little visibly resented it; and the only way at present to treat him was as a graceful, an almost genial, a certainly harmless eccentric, with whom one assumed that all things were well and held one's tongue about the prosperity he had forfeited, or maintained to any questioner—much rejoicing, for the time, there were none—that such were the interlunar swoons of the true as distinguished from the false artist, and that the style of genius was as much in them as in the famous Homeric nod.

Here again as in other passages we find no change except the introduction of a peculiar turn which is so typical of James' later style. The character of Rowland undergoes no more alteration than did the preceeding ones. A few sentences will illustrate, as in the other cases, the very minute brushing up which they underwent in revision:

II, p. 33. *First edition*

Rowland's face bore the traces of extreme trouble. The *frate* kept his finger in his little book, and folded his arms picturesquely across his breast. It can hardly be determined whether his attitude, as he bent his sympathetic Italian eye upon Rowland, was a happy incident or the result of an exquisite spiritual discernment. To Rowland, at any rate, under the emotion of that moment, it seemed blessedly opportune.

Revised edition p. 277

Rowland's face might have borne for him the traces of extreme trouble; something he appeared mildly to consider as he kept his finger in his little book and folded his arms picturesquely across his breast. Was his attitude, as he bent his sympathetic Italian eyes, the mere accident of his civility or the fruit of an exquisite spiritual tact? To Rowland, however this might have been, it appeared a sort of offer of ready intelligence.

After the interview described above Rowland had a talk with Roderick concerning his attitude toward his betrothed and proposed sending for both her and his mother. We cite here extracts from their conversation:

II, p. 34.

You are still engaged to your cousin? Roderick frowned darkly but assented. "Wouldn't it give you pleasure, then, to see her?" Roderick turned away and for some moments answered nothing. "Pleasure!" he said at last, huskily. "Pain will do as well!" "I regard you as a sick man," Rowland continued. "In such a case Miss Garland would say that her place is at your side."

p. 279.

Your engagement still holds? " 'Holds?'" Roderick glared. "Holds what?" "Well some residuum of what it originally did. If you were to see your intended you would perhaps be able to judge." Roderick thought. "Do you mean by that that if *you* see her you may be better able to squash me?" Rowland winced at this—he flushed; but he bore up. "I should in the light of that speech, even if I hadn't already, as it seems to me, other lights, regard you as a very sick man. I can't imagine that if Miss Garland knew *how* sick she shouldn't at once feel that her place is at your side."

In the above few lines the author has given an entirely different turn to Roderick's answer; he made him rather impertinent to his benefactor Rowland, aiming a direct shaft at him, and in this way increasing or accentuating Roderick's "disintegration." The whole chapter in which the above conversation is reported underwent very thorough revision. Unfortunately lack of space prevents me from giving many illustrations. A few disconnected phrases, however, might give a fair idea of those revisions:

<i>First edition</i>	<i>Revised edition</i>
touching gentleness . . .	noble mildness . . .
.
in no very serene frame of mind . .	in no great riot of relief . . .
.
of his agitated conscience . . .	places of his charity . . .
.
to journey tremulously to shores darkened by the shadow of deeper alarms. . . .	only to be handed over at the end to an element still more capable of betraying him . . .
.
He could only promise himself to be their devoted friend and servant. . .	He could only promise himself to be their stubborn even if disdained support. . . .
.
If redemption—Roderick seemed to reason—was to arrive with his mother and his affianced bride, these last moments of error should be doubly erratic. He did nothing; but inaction, with him, took on an unwonted air of gaiety. . . . though Rowland failed to guess in what fashion present circumstances had modified his relations with Christina.	If redemption—the brilliant youth appeared to reason—was to arrive with his mother and his affianced bride, these last moments of error should be worth redeeming. He only idled, but he idled with intensi- ty. . . . though Rowland could but wonder to what issue events had brought his relations with Christina.

The reader will agree that in the last case we have a decided improvement on the first version.

Before passing to the treatment of other characters in the book we shall give one more paragraph involving Rowland and his attitude toward Mary Garland, a paragraph which illustrates admirably the method employed by James:

II, p. 83. *First edition*

Rowland felt himself at liberty to say no more. No allusion to Christina had passed between them since the day they met her at Saint Peter's, but he knew that she knew, by that infallible sixth sense of a woman who loves, that this strange and beautiful girl had the power to injure her. To what extent she had the will Mary was uncertain; but last night's interview apparently had not reassured her. It was under these circumstances equally unbecoming for Rowland either to deprecate or to defend Christina, and he had to content himself with simply having verified the girl's own assurance that she had made a bad impression. He tried to talk of indifferent matters—about the statues and the frescoes; but to-day plainly aesthetic curiosity, on his companion's part, had folded its wings. Curiosity of another sort had taken its place. Mary was longing, he was sure, to question him about Christina; but she found a dozen reasons for hesitating.

Revised edition p. 338

He was still silent again, held a moment by a strange intensity of thought. Yes, this young woman would never be anything but unjust to the other one, and that though neither had a vulgar soul. And he saw the attitude in Mary as immutable as ever, and Christina was interesting, and Mary would be wrong. He himself could take it thus and yet not "mind." How little with her there, verily, he minded! This came and went in fifty seconds—leaving all the rest, however, not less distinct. He knew that his companion knew, by that infallible sixth sense of a woman who loves, how the beautiful strange girl she had seen for the first time at Saint Peter's (since when she had asked no question about her) had possibly the power to do her a definite wrong. To what extent she had the will remained of course ambiguous, and last night's interview had somehow, by a perverse process, only proved an omen of ill. It was in these conditions equally unbecoming for Rowland to deprecate or to defend Christina, and he had to content himself with simply having verified the latter's own assurance that she had made a bad impression. He tried to talk of indifferent matters . . . about the statues and the frescoes; but to-day plainly the quest of elegant knowledge on Mary's part had folded its wings. . . . She was longing, he was sure, to break ground again on the subject of Christina; but . . .

Psychological analysis is again the process employed by James to bring out into higher relief the sentiments of his "hero."

Mr. Leavenworth, the wealthy American who gave Roderick an "order" for a statue of Intellectual Refinement, fared rather well in the slight changes of the revised edition. James made him more conceited, more boastful, more what he considered American, than in the first portrayal:

II, p. 22 *First edition*

"And now for our Culture!" he said in the same sonorous tones, demanding with a gesture the unveiling of the figure, which stood somewhat apart, muffled in a great sheet. . . .

The forehead, however, strikes me as not sufficiently intellectual. In the statue of Culture, you know, that should be the great point. The eye should instinctively seek the forehead. Couldn't you elevate it a little?"

Revised edition p. 266

"And now, please, for *my* Creation!" he said with the same grandiloquence, demanding by a gesture the discovery of the muffled mass that, standing somewhat apart, had represented for some time past the young sculptor's partial response to his encouraging order. . . .

The cerebral development, however, strikes me as not sufficiently emphasised. Our subject being, as we called it—didn't we?—Intellectual Refinement, there should be no mistaking the intellect, symbolised (wouldn't it be?) by an unmistakably thoughtful brow. The eye should instinctively seek the frontal indications. Couldn't you strengthen them a little?"

Of Miss Blanchard, who was really in love with Rowland but who was to marry Leavenworth, we read:

II, p. 75.

. . . The facile side of a union with Miss Blanchard had never been present to his mind; it had struck him as a thing, in all ways, to be compassed with a great effort. He had a half an hour's talk with her; a farewell talk, as it seemed to him—a farewell not to a real illusion, but to the idea that for him in that matter there could ever be an acceptable *pis-aller*. He congratulated Miss Blanchard upon her engagement, and she received his good wishes with a touch of primness. But she was always a

p. 326

The facile side of a union with Miss. Blanchard had never been present to his mind; it had struck him as a thing, in all ways, to be compassed with a great effort, and he had not even renounced the effort: he had never come, he felt, so near it. He had half an hour's talk with her; a farewell talk, as it seemed to him—a farewell not to a real illusion, but to the idea that for him, in the matter of committing himself for life, grim thought, there could ever be a motive that wouldn't ache like a wound. Such a pressure

II, p. 75. *First edition*

trifle prim, even when she was quoting Mrs. Browning and George Sand, and this harmless defect did not prevent her responding on this occasion that Mr. Leavenworth had a "glorious heart." Rowland wished to manifest an extreme regard, and he fell a-thinking that a certain natural ease in a woman was the most delightful thing in the world.

Revised edition p. 326

would resemble that of the button of an electric bell kept down by the thumb—prescribing definite action to stop the merciless ring. He congratulated Miss Blanchard upon her engagement, and she received his good wishes as if he had been a servant, at dinner, presenting the potatoes at her elbow. She helped herself in moderation, but also all in profile. He had wished to be decent, but he felt the chill and his zeal relaxed, while he fell a-thinking that a certain natural ease in a woman was the most delightful thing in the world.

The omission of Mrs. Browning and George Sand is a happy one. Instead of elaborating on the character of Miss Blanchard, however, James again centers the interest around Rowland and his reactions, while Miss Blanchard, except for her being shorn of her outward primness—we infer it still exists—remains virtually unchanged. We shall return to this passage, however, in another connection.

The remaining characters, Mrs. Light and Mrs. Hudson, the Cavaliere and others, underwent very little revision from the pen of the author. James made Mrs. Light perhaps a trifle more vulgar and ridiculous when he retouched the following passage:

I, p. 186

Rowland promptly remarked that this was obvious. He saw that the lady's irritated nerves demanded comfort from flattering reminiscence, and he assumed designedly the attitude of a zealous auditor.

.....
One must believe in something!

...
She was a very ugly baby; ...

...

p. 217

Rowland promptly remarked that this was obvious, for he saw that the poor woman's irritated nerves required the comfort of some accepted overflow and he assumed designedly the attitude of a person impressed by her sacrifices. ...
One must believe in something, hang it! ...

She was a very ugly baby—I give you that for a remarkable fact; ...

I, p. 186 *First edition*

A certain person—I needn't name him—had trifled with my generous confidence— . . .

. . .

Of course my face was sad. . . .

. . .

I have taken her to the Jews and bidden her put up her veil, and asked if the mother of that young lady was not safe!

Revised edition p. 217

A certain person—I needn't name him—had trifled with a confidence—a confidence that I had in short placed: oh my dear, but *placed!* . .

Oh, of course, after what I had seen, the poor face of me, off my guard, must have told things! . . .

I've taken her to the Jews and bidden her put off her veil and let down her hair, show her teeth, her shoulders, her arms, all sorts of things, and asked if the mother of that young lady wasn't safe!

In the very last passage cited James emphasizes the vulgarity, the cheapness of Mrs. Light, by having her enumerate all of Christina's charms, leaving almost nothing to the imagination. Where, in the first edition the author had Mrs. Light tell Rowland that she would have given her a bath of "molten pearls", if necessary, in the revised version he changed it to "*millefleurs*, at fifty francs a pint"; in the first we read: "pulled off her rags, and as I may say, wrapped her up in cotton"—"in velvet and ermine" is what we find in the revision.

We shall now pass to a brief consideration of the type of changes we find in the revised text, attempting to classify them if possible.

One of the first questions we might ask ourselves is: did James change his manner of *description*? Has he retouched the passages in which he described the American or the Italian scene? He tells us himself in his Preface that the Italian scene was still very fresh in his mind when he wrote the book: "One fact about it indeed outlives all others; the fact that, as the loved Italy was the scene of my fiction—so much more loved than one has ever been able, even after fifty efforts, to say!—and as having had to leave it persisted as an inward ache, so there was soreness in still contriving, after a fashion, to hang about it and in prolonging, from month to month, the illusions of the golden air." As for

Northampton, where the first part of the book is laid, he says: "Pathetic, as we say, on the other hand, no doubt, to reperusal, the manner in which the evocation, so far as attempted, of the small New England town of my first two chapters, fails of intensity—if intensity, in such a connexion, had been indeed to be looked for. . . . What I wanted, in essence, was the image of some perfectly humane community which was yet all incapable of providing for it, and I had to take what my scant experience furnished me." He apologizes for naming the town on the ground that, under the influence of Balzac, who "'did' Saumur, did Limoges, did Guérande," "why shouldn't one, with fond fatuity, talk of almost the only small American *ville de province* of which one had happened to lay up, long before, a pleased vision?" We cannot cite further from James' arguments but shall show immediately how he handled some passages of a descriptive character:

p. 55

First edition

. . . Roderick had chosen the feasting place; he knew it well and had passed many a summer afternoon there, lying at his length on the grass and gazing at the blue undulations of the horizon. It was a meadow on the edge of a wood, with mossy rocks protruding through the grass and a little lake on the other side.

Revised edition

p. 63

Roderick had chosen his happy valley, the feasting place; he knew it well and had passed many a summer afternoon there, lying at his length on the grass in the shade and looking away to the blue distances, the "purple rim" of the poet, which had the wealth of the world, all the unattainable of life, beyond them. A high-hung meadow stretched on one side to a peculiarly dark wood, in which he used to say there were strange beasts and "monsters," who couldn't come out, but who put it out of the question that one should go in; and the meadow had high mossy rocks protruding through the grass and formed in the opposite direction the shore of a small lake.

The insertion of the "'purple rim' of the poet," of the "monsters," simply gives a pedantic tone to the passage, without adding much to the actual description of the spot.

p. 192 *First edition*

Rowland went very often to the Coliseum; he was never tired of inspecting this monument.

Revised edition

p. 225

Rowland went very often to the Coliseum; he had established with this monument and with its exuberance of ruin, in those days all untrimmed, a relation of the tenderest intimacy.

Here James lends personal attributes to inanimate objects, as he also does in the following passage, which is not strictly speaking descriptive:

p. 65

Rowland, in the geniality of a mood attuned to the mellow charm of a Roman villa . . .

p. 76

Rowland, in the geniality of a mood attuned to all the stored patiences that lurk in Roman survivals.

II. 161

a huge white monastery rises abruptly from the green floor of the valley and complicates its picturesqueness with an element rare in Swiss scenery.

p. 427

a huge white monastery rises abruptly and contributes to the somewhat spare concert of blue-green and blue-grey the diversion of a sharp discord.

In the last cited passage James adds a touch of color which is not found in the first version—in other words he explains what was “rare in Swiss scenery.” On the whole, however, James left all his passages of description virtually untouched. Occasionally he inserted a word or two to give local color, as for instance, when in speaking of Mrs. Hudson, James wrote in the first edition (p. 40): “it was singular to see a woman to whom the experience of life had conveyed such scanty reassurance,” he inserted in rewriting: “the experience of the *elm-shaded* life,” thus referring to one of the characteristics of New England towns. And again, at the very end of the novel, in the first version we read: “Mary Garland lives with Mrs. Hudson at Northampton . . .,” while in the second we find: “She lives with Mrs. Hudson under the *New England elms*. . .”; in the first James speaks of Mount Holyoke as one of the hills near Northampton, in the second he adds Mount Tom. But these changes are extremely slight, almost negligible when we compare them with the revisions cited in other connections.

Another type of change is the introduction of phrases which give evidence of learning, and which add a pedantic tone, as in the previously cited passage about "interlunar swoons" and the "Homeric nod," references which rather detract and mystify, instead of elucidating and contributing something to our understanding. Or, where in the first edition, in speaking of "living with open doors as long as we can," Roderick exclaims: "Yes, let us close no doors that open upon Rome. For this, for the mind, is eternal warm weather"; in the revised version James has Roderick say: "For this, for the mind, must be the most breathable air in the world—it gives a new sense to the old *Pax Romana*." Now Roderick's mentality and culture were not of the type to justify his speaking in such terms.

James showed a greater fondness for similes and metaphors in the revisions he made. Where in the first version we read (II, p. 62): "with his head high and his brilliant glance unclouded," the revised version gives (p. 312): "with his head high and *his face as clear as a beach at the ebb*." In the original version (II, p. 74) James has Rowland reflect about Mary: "he would have called her beautiful"; in the revision (p. 326): "he would recklessly have pronounced it 'rich'. It was *as if she had somehow put lights in her dim windows and you could hear somewhere behind them the tuning of mystic fiddles*." The passage previously cited referring to Miss Blanchard, where James introduced the "button of an electric bell" is another illustration of the same tendency. In describing Mary's smile, James wrote in the early version: "Rowland, indeed, had not yet seen this smile in operation; but something assured him that her rigid gravity had a radiant counterpart."; the author revised it as follows: "Rowland indeed had not yet seen this accident produced; but something assured him that when, on due cause, she should cease to be serious, it would be like the final rising of the plain *green curtain of the old theatre on some—not very modern—comedy*." Referring to the Cavaliere's smile, the first version reads: "This time unmistakably the Cavaliere smiled, but still in that very out-of-the-way place"; in the

revision: "The Cavaliere's smile was *like the red tip of a cigar seen for a few seconds in the dark.*" In a letter to Cecilia, Rowland writes of Roderick: "Nature has given him his faculty out of hand, and bidden him be hanged with it!" The revised version reads, in addition to this phrase, "*It's as if she shied her great gold brick at him and cried 'Look out for your head'.*" And again, speaking of Roderick, James reflects: "with a look in his face that Rowland had not seen all winter. It was strikingly beautiful." He changed it to: "the reign of all reason was in his face. *It was like the sudden light of a golden age to come.*" These few examples give a fair idea of the type of figures of speech introduced by James in revising the novel.

Very often James inserts expressions which are extremely forced and unnatural, such as: "she was a small *softly-desperate* woman," in place of the original "small eager woman"; "the girl went on with her sewing" is replaced by "the girl prosecuted her work"; "he was killed" is supplanted by "he was *awfully* killed"; "a singularly unhappy woman" reads in the revised version "a woman *heavily depressed*"; "duties of this life" becomes "*duties of our earthly pilgrimage*"; "an old friend" is changed to "an *extreme intimate*"; "*publicity of expression*" is a phrase added to the description of Mary's charms; "he walked up and down a while reflecting" is superseded by "he walked up and down and *publicly considered*"; "there is nothing *narrow* about her but her experience" is changed to "nothing *scanted*"; "a vivid portrait of the girl" becomes "a *straight recall* of the young girl"; "a piece of needlework" gives place to "a *strenuous-looking* piece of needlework"; "But we are very easy now; are we not, Mary?" put in the mouth of Mrs. Hudson is vastly more appropriate than the later: "Now, however, we're quite ourselves, and Mary, I think, is really enjoying the *revulsion.*"; "I thought Northampton really unpardonably tame" is changed to: "I thought Northampton quite too *abysmally flat.*"

James often substitutes a concrete statement or expression or a more common one, for a less definite one, as for instance:

p. 65 *First edition*

Well, the passion is blazing; we have been piling on fuel handsomely.

p. 68

the boy was living too fast, he would have said, and giving alarming pledges to ennui in his later years.

II, p. 149

Mrs. Hudson was obliged to intermit her suspicions of the deleterious atmosphere of the Old World, and to acknowledge the superior purity of the breezes of Engelthal.

II, p. 23

A sculptor isn't a tailor.

II, p. 3

he used to reflect that during those days he had for a while literally been beside himself.

II, p. 38

Roderick's sending for them was, to her imagination, a confession of illness.

II, p. 63

She adores me!

Revised edition

p. 74

Well then, haven't I got up steam enough? It won't have been for want of your being a first-class stoker.

p. 78

he was eating his cake all at once and might have none left for the morrow.

p. 413

Mrs. Hudson was reduced to forgetting, above all, that the poison of Europe—as she knew Europe—might lurk in the breeze, and even to admitting that the eggs of Engelthal were almost as fresh and the cream almost as thick as those of the Connecticut valley.

p. 267

A sculptor isn't a tailor, and I didn't measure you for a pair of trousers.

p. 275

he used to reflect that during those days he had been literally *beside* himself—even as the ass, in the farmer's row of stalls, may be beside the ox.

p. 284

Roderick's sending for them at all was, to her imagination, a confession of some pernicious ill, some visitation, probably, of malignant disease.

p. 313

She thinks all the world of me. She likes me as if I were good to eat. She's saving me up, cannibal-fashion, as if I were a big feast.

Sometimes James introduces expressions which are almost too familiar, as for example, where in the first version we

read: "that another man admired her," in the revised edition we find: "the point that another man was *in a state* about her"; or instead of "miserably tipsy" James corrects, "miserably *the worst for liquor*"; "he had had a domestic struggle" becomes "he had had a *row* at home"; or when Madame Grandoni tries to find a term to describe Mary Garland, James, in revising has her call Mary "Miss Garland of the *Back Woods*." Other examples could be cited.

Several passages have already been given to illustrate the rather obscure, analytical style which James affected in his later years. A few more examples will emphasize my point:

p. 70 <i>First edition</i>	<i>Revised edition</i> p. 80
Rowland took immense satisfaction in his companion's lively desire to transmute all his impressions into production.	Rowland took high satisfaction in this positive law, as he saw it, of his companion's spirit, the instinct of investing every grain of sense or soul in the enterprise of planned production.
p. 10 He was not a sentimental father, and the roughness I just now spoke of in Rowland's life dated from his early boyhood.	p. 10 He was not a sentimental father, and the introduction into Rowland's life of that grim ghost of the wholesome by which I spoke of it just now as being haunted dated from early boyhood.
p. 170 it seemed, indeed, to Rowland surprisingly frank—a pregnant example of his companion's strangely irresponsible way of looking at harmful facts.	p. 199 it seemed indeed to Rowland surprisingly free—a lively instance of his friend's disassociated manner of looking, as might have been said, at the time of day.
II, p. 60 Roderick was peculiarly inscrutable.	p. 310 Roderick's reflecting surface exhibited, for the time, something of a blur.
II, p. 69 Rowland had purchased, as he supposed, temporary tranquillity for Mary Garland; but his own humour in these days was not	p. 320 Rowland had purchased, as he supposed, temporary peace for Mary Garland; but his own spirit, in these days, was given over to the

II, p. 69 *First edition*

especially peaceful. He was attempting, in a certain sense, to lead the ideal life, and he found it at the least not easy.

II, p. 52

She said many things which he thought very profound—that is, if they really had the fine intention he suspected.

II, p. 7

He had, of course, asked himself how far it was questionable taste to inform an unprotected girl, for the needs of a cause, that another man admired her; the thing superficially had an uncomfortable analogy with treating the young lady as a cat's-paw.

Revised edition p. 320

elements. The ideal life had been his general purpose, but the ideal life could only go on very real legs and feet, and the body and the extremities somehow failed always to move in concert.

p. 301

She said many things that he thought very happy—that is if they meant certain other things that they perhaps didn't, and meant *all* of those.

p. 247

He had of course rather sounded his scruples before deciding to make to an unprotected girl, for the needs of a cause—and not *her* cause, but his very own—the point that another man was in a state about her: the thing too much resembled, superficially, risking the disturbance of her peace.

The small and unimportant changes which Henry James made are legion and it is impossible to record even a hundredth part of them. In collating the two texts one wonders why he should have preferred one word to another, as for instance "slim" to "slender"; "romantic" to "picturesque"; "ability" to "talent"; "immediate interest" to "quicken interest"; "foolish" to "silly"; "nasty word" to "sharp word"; "estimate" to "valuation"; "mildness" to "gentleness"; "companionship" to "society"; "friend" to "companion"; "plaguey" to "devilish"; "base" to "rude"; "candid" to "frank"; "flushing" to "blushing," and many others. It is merely a question of personal taste and something which an outsider cannot judge. James seems to have developed a preference for certain expressions which one finds often in the revised novel, such as "a vague afterglow," the verb "flare,"—light plays an important rôle in his imagery.

In a few cases the second version is an improvement on the first, as in the following passages:

p. 24 *First edition*

Rowland's intelligent praise had sobered him; he was ruminating the full-flavoured verdict of culture.

II, p. 17

It is in the matter of quantity that he has broken down.

II, p. 72

They're a precious pair! This is what I think. You by no means exhaust the subject when you say that Christina is dramatic.

Revised edition p. 27

Rowland's intelligent praise had steadied him; he had heard absolutely for the first time in his life the voice of taste and of authority

p. 259

The talent's there, it's the application that has broken down.

p. 324

I think they're a precious pair—and yet that one hasn't said all when one says, as I have so often done, that she likes drama, likes theatricals—what do you call them?—histrionics, for their own sweet sake.

The last citation, from the mouth of the Cavaliere, is more in keeping with the Italian gentleman than the original version. But weighing all the examples gleaned from the collation of the two editions, cases of the last kind are in a decided minority. The closing paragraph of the novel is a good illustration of the points I have been trying to bring out in this study; I cite it here in full before giving the natural conclusions reached in my investigations:

II, p. 192

That cry still lives in Rowland's ears. It interposes persistently against the reflection that when he sometimes—very rarely—sees her, she is unreservedly kind to him; against the memory that during the dreary journey back to America, made of course with his assistance, there was a great frankness in her gratitude, a great gratitude in her frankness. Mary Garland lives with Mrs. Hudson at Northampton, where Rowland visits his cousin Cecilia more frequently than of old. When he calls upon Mary he never sees Mrs.

p. 463

That cry still lives in Rowland's ears. It interposes persistently against the consciousness that when he sometimes—very rarely—sees her, she is inscrutably civil to him; against the reflexion that during the awful journey back to America, made of course with his assistance, she had used him, with the last rigour of consistency, as a character definitely appointed to her use. She lives with Mrs. Hudson under the New England elms, where he also visits his cousin Cecilia more frequently than of old. When he calls on Mary he never sees the

II, p. 192 *First edition*

Hudson. Cecilia, who, having her shrewd impression that he comes to see the young lady at the other house as much as to see herself, does not feel obliged to seem unduly flattered, calls him whenever he reappears the most restless of mortals. But he always says to her in answer, "No, I assure you I am the most patient!"

Revised edition p. 463

older lady. Cecilia, who having her shrewd impression that he comes for the young person, the still young person, of interest at the other house as much as for any one else, fails to show as unduly flattered, and in fact pronounces him, at each reappearance, the most restless of mortals. But he always says to her in answer: "No, I assure you I'm the most patient!" And then he talks to her of Roderick, of whose history she never wearies and whom he never elsewhere names.

Sufficient illustrations have been given to allow the reader to judge for himself and to agree that in revising *Roderick Hudson*, Henry James made very few radical changes, that he in no way altered the story, but that he made a most minute revision of his style. The result of that revision is, barring very few exceptions, the introduction of an element, germs of which were to be found in the first version—that is, a great tendency to analyze; that in the final version this tendency became a habit, an affectation, if you will. The effect of that introspective, analytical trait is an obscuring of spontaneous, natural passages, making them labored, heavy, ambiguous, and sometimes almost impenetrable. There is a feeling of effort, of deliberate striving for effect which spoils the youthful production and robs it of what was fresh and easy and sincerely unaffected.

HÉLÈNE HARVITT